Best Practices in Contact Investigations

THREE PERSPECTIVES-CONTACT INVESTIGATIONS IN VARIOUS SCHOOL SETTINGS
Contact investigations (CI) remain an important public health activity in TB control and prevention.

CIs in congregate settings pose additional challenges.

3 short presentations about CIs in public school and university settings.

Reflect different aspects of conducting CIs.

Questions for the panel after all presentations.
PRESENTERS

- Angela Crankfield-Edmond
  - Policy changes in the times of social media
- Jan Markowitz
  - Collaboration with a large university
- Kimberly Townsend
  - Using quantiFERON® in 2 public schools
- Questions for the panel
HIGH SCHOOL CONTACT INVESTIGATION:
SOCIAL MEDIA INCREASES THE HYPE

Angela Crankfield-Edmond, Program Chief
Prince George’s County Health Department
Communicable and Vector-Borne Disease Control
March 26, 2015
177 students and staff identified as high and medium contacts
Case played on a sports team and did not ride the bus
Case of African descent
New - Prince George’s County Superintendent of Schools and Chief, School Health Services
Prince George’s County Health Department (PGCHD) has conducted several school contact investigations
CONTACT INVESTIGATION PREPARATION

- Initiated discussion with Prince George’s County Public School (PGCPS) School Health Services (SHS)
- Phone call with Principal
  - Site visit planned to discuss clinic plans, space needed, and dates for testing
  - SHS did not participate
- Request made for classroom and teammate list--received quickly from the school
  - This went extremely well
CONTACT INVESTIGATION PREPARATION

- On site meeting held with the Principal and School Health Nurse
- Principal declined the offer for an information session for the staff
- Visited classrooms to determine any needs to expand investigation
- Health room selected by school as the place where the clinic will be held
- Flow of clinic determined (In the past, the meeting was attended by a SHS staff person)
CONTACT INVESTIGATION PREPARATION

- Informational letters prepared by the PGCHD
- Fact sheets provided to the school for dissemination to all staff and students
  - Students to take letters home
- Exposure letters and fact sheet were mailed to those considered to be exposed and needing testing and evaluation by the Health Department
EVENTS THAT OCCURRED-WEEK OF TESTING

- Testing occurred on Monday and Tuesday for those identified as exposed
- Principal, without discussion with Health Department, invited all teachers to come and be tested (n=79)
- Wednesday and Thursday were scheduled reading days. On Wednesday 5 positive TSTs
  - Included teachers not part of exposure group
- Green cards given to students with the result of the TST to take home to the parent
- Parent was called for those who tested positive to set up an appointment for further testing (QFT and chest x-ray) and evaluation
EVENTS THAT OCCURRED-WEEK OF TESTING

- Wednesday evening the investigation hit the news
- An interview had been conducted by PGCPS School Health Services staff
- Media was aware that additional people had tested positive
- Media deemed it an outbreak
- Normally the PGCHD Public Information Officer coordinates all media inquiries
The word was spreading quickly that there was an outbreak of TB at the school

Students tweeted things such as:
- They’re trying to kill us
- There’s an outbreak and they won’t let us go home
- The school needs to be closed and the air cleaned
- Joking about the green cards and a student walk out at 10:45 am

Students posted pictures covering their faces.
SOCIAL MEDIA

Difficult to control
EVENTS THAT OCCURRED-WEEK OF TESTING

- Angry parents picking up students
- Teachers also fed into student frenzy
  - Stating that the school should be closed
  - Teachers identified the case, and students started bullying
  - Case is of African descent and the fear of EBOLA probably didn’t help
- Parents, students, and teachers showed up at the PGCHD TB Control Program
Health Department Public Information Officer and I reported to the school the next morning
- Media was awaiting our arrival
- Interview was conducted

At 10:45am (same time as planned walk out) live broadcast to all classrooms- information provided about
- TB, signs and symptoms
- Those identified as having exposure are being tested
- Meaning of a positive TST

Advised that there is NO outbreak and no need for anyone to go home
DAMAGE CONTROL

- I met with parents as they arrived to pick up children and explained the situation
- Many parents stated that they never received a letter, or any information
- It appears that the information letter either was not given to all the students and staff
- Students did not take letters home to the parents
DAMAGE CONTROL

- Several media interviews conducted
- Information session held with all staff
- Press Conference conducted
  - With Health Department and PGCPS School Health Services
- By the next day media was quiet
CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- As a result communication protocol was created with the PGCPS School Board
- Health Services which made it very clear that the Health Department is the lead and will direct all contact investigation activities
FLOW CHART
SCHOOL CONTACT INVESTIGATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOTIFICATION TO HEALTH OFFICER, DEPUTIES &amp; PGCHD STAFF</th>
<th>PGCHD Environmental Health/Communicable Disease Control</th>
<th>CVDC/Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NOTIFICATION TO DCAO, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES &amp; COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS</td>
<td>PGCHD Health Officer</td>
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<td>NOTIFICATION TO CHIEF, SCHOOL HEALTH POLICY, SERVICES AND INNOVATION/CEO</td>
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<td>SUPV RN</td>
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<td>NOTIFICATION TO PGCPS COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER</td>
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<td>FORWARD ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE, BUS &amp; TEACHER INFORMATION TO PGCHD CVDC PROGRAM CHIEF</td>
<td>PGCPS</td>
<td>Principal/SUPV RN</td>
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PGCHD TO INITIATE/CONDUCT THE FOLLOWING TASKS:

- INITIATE PLANNING MEETING (LOGISTICS, DATES, TESTING, ETC.)
- INITIATE INFORMATIONAL/INSTRUCTIVE MEETING WITH SCHOOL STAFF/ PARENTS
- DEVELOP AND MAIL LETTERS TO THOSE DIRECTLY IMPACTED
- DEVELOP UNIFORM MESSAGE (RADIO, PRINT, TV AND SOCIAL MEDIA)
- CONDUCT SITE TESTING
- SEND EVENT STATUS REPORT TO SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES
CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- Development and implementation of an administrative procedure in collaboration with PGCPS
- PGCHD will participate in the School Health Services Annual Pre-School Meetings to review administrative procedures with staff
- In the event of a communicable disease event, a mandatory meeting will be held between PGCHD, PGCPS School Health Services and the school staff (Principals, Teachers, Administrative Staff, Coaches, etc.) as needed
CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- PGCPS School Health Services will be involved in all calls, meetings, and site visits.
- PGCHD will receive all media requests, and will serve as lead for media outlets for public health issues.
- PGCHD/Parent Meeting will be offered as an option in all cases.
- PGCHD will develop and mail information letters out.
  - Signed by the Health Officer and CEO.
CHANGES TO PROCEDURES

- Test results will be mailed to parents and not provided to the students.
- The PGCHD Communications Team will provide the PGCPS Communications Manager with facts sheets and information to post on website and distribute.
THANK YOU!